

**Question for written answer E-000308/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL) and Marina Albiol Guzmán (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Detention of activists in Lesbos

We have learnt from reports by journalists that several Spaniards have been arrested by the Greek coastguard in Lesbos (Greece) on charges of 'migrant trafficking'. They were in fact working there as volunteers rescuing refugees from the Aegean Sea.

The people arrested are known in Spain for their social and professional work (some serve as firemen) and we have not the slightest doubt that they were known to the Greek security forces and duly identified.

Operation Mare Nostrum managed to rescue over 150 000 people before being stood down and replaced by operations that focus on border security. We are concerned at these arrests now of people who have undertaken to serve their fellow men – and who, in so doing, also help alleviate the sloth of the EU authorities, a sloth that is pushing up the numbers of those drowning as they flee hunger and wars for which we have much to answer.

Does the Commission know about these arrests? Is arresting volunteers a new form of border policy?

What steps will it take to ensure no EU government ever acts in such a deplorable way again?